

Appl. No. 10/808,626  
Reply to OA of 3/8/06

**Amendments to the Claims:**

Please amend the claims as shown in the Listing of Claims below. This Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-12 (Canceled)

Claims 13-21 (Canceled)

Claim 22. (Currently Amended) An image ~~formation~~ forming apparatus for forming images on sheets fed from two or more sheet supplying ~~device~~ devices detachably mountable to the image formation ~~forming~~ apparatus, said image ~~formation~~ forming apparatus comprising:

a sheet transporting unit transporting said sheets fed from said sheet supplying ~~device~~ devices;

an image formation unit forming an image on a transfer member;

a transfer unit transferring the image on the transfer member onto a sheet; and

~~a control unit setting a sheet transporting interval in the sheet transporting unit based on a sheet interval information according to an amount of the sheets in the sheet feeding unit; and~~

~~a determination unit for determining a connection position of the each sheet supplying device and deciding whether to inquire of each sheet supplying device a sheet interval according to the connection position,~~

~~wherein the control unit selects whether or not to set an image forming interval on the transfer member according to the sheet interval information and determination result of the determination unit~~

wherein responsive to the control unit inquiring one of the sheet supplying devices, the one sheet supplying device transmits a sheet interval information according to an amount of sheets therein to the control unit, and

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wherein responsive to the one sheet supplying device transmitting the sheet interval information to the control unit, the control unit changes an image forming interval on the transfer member and a sheet feeding interval by the one sheet supplying device.

Claim 23. (Currently Amended) An image formation forming apparatus according to Claim 22, wherein the sheet interval information includes a number of sheets in the one sheet supplying device.

Claim 24. (Currently Amended) An image formation forming apparatus according to Claim 23, wherein in a case where the number of sheets in the one sheet supplying device is greater than a predetermined number of sheets, the control unit receives information relating to a first sheet feeding interval, and the sheet transporting unit transports the sheets at sets the image forming interval and the sheet feeding interval according to the information relating to said first sheet feeding interval; and

wherein in a case where the number of sheets in said one sheet supplying device is less than or equal to said predetermined number of sheets, the control unit receives information relating to a second sheet feeding interval longer than said first sheet feeding interval, and the transporting unit transports said sheets at sets the image forming interval and the sheet feeding interval according to the information relating to said second sheet feeding interval.

Claim 25. (Currently Amended) An image formation forming apparatus according to Claim 24,

wherein the image formation unit includes a plurality of image carrying members, each image carrying member carrying one color of a plurality of color toner images,

~~wherein the transfer member includes an intermediate transfer member,~~

wherein the transfer member includes [[the]] an intermediate transfer member facilitating primary image transfer by contacting said plurality of image carrying members for transferring said plurality of color toner images onto said intermediate transfer member, and

wherein the transfer unit facilitates secondary image transfer by transferring said plurality of color toner images from said intermediate transfer member onto a sheet, and

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~~wherein said control unit receives information on whether a sheet remains in said sheet supplying device, in a case where the receiving unit receives the information relating to the second sheet feeding interval, and responsive to said information on whether the sheet remains, initiates primary image transfer onto the intermediate transfer member.~~

Claim 26. (New) An image forming apparatus according to Claim 22, wherein in a case where the connection position is a position in which a sheet is fed from a sheet feeding device before the image is formed on the transfer member, the control unit does not inquire the sheet interval from the sheet supplying device feeding the sheet.